



## What Happens After a Report?

**H**otline workers within CFSA's Child Protective Services (CPS) Administration accept reports that meet the legal definitions of child abuse and neglect in the District of Columbia. They refer people who call about other matters to local services that can meet their needs.

When CPS accepts an allegation of child abuse or neglect for investigation, a trained social worker goes out within two hours in an emergency or within 24 hours for other situations. The goal is to see and talk to the child and other key people, find out what's going on, and protect the child and help the family as needed.

Investigations are confidential, so CPS does not tell the family who called or share results of the investigation with the person who reported. However, CPS does step in promptly to ensure children are safe. That may include referring the family to one of the neighborhood-based Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Cooperatives for service or opening a child welfare case so CFSA can continue helping the child and family over time. In certain circumstances, CPS can remove children from home immediately for their safety—but CFSA must seek approval for that action from DC Family Court within five days.



Each alleged instance of child abuse and neglect in an investigation will have one of three possible outcomes:

- “Substantiated,” meaning CPS found convincing proof that the child was abused or neglect.
- “Inconclusive,” meaning CPS could not prove or disprove the report.
- “Unfounded,” meaning the CPS investigation showed the report was not true.

Under law, when CPS findings are substantiated or inconclusive, CFSA must enter the name of the maltreater in the District's Child Protection Register. [Link](#)